1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

The tents TO BE TAKEN IN THESE HILLS ARE MUCH LIGHTER THAN 484
those square double-roofed tents used in India; even the smaller 342
variety of that sort called "hill-tent" is somewhat too cumbersome. A simple tent, 9 feet square and 7 feet high, with the sloped roof ending in a wall of 3 feet, suits us best. For natives, a tent with the roof slope continued to the ground is good, since, for the same height, it gives more floor-space. A small shāmiāna, or square awning on four poles, with or without side curtains, is one of those things that will add to one's comfort; it affords shade without the confinement of air; for indeed the inside of such tents as we have spoken of is almost unbearable from heat when under a bright sun; only one reckons on being able to pitch under the shelter of a tree; in default, a shāmiāna will be most useful. At one time I arranged a tent, of somewhat different shape, in such a way that one side would lift up, and, being supported on a couple of sticks, do duty for a shāmiāna by day, while at night the join was laced up and the tent made taut again.

Very moderately provided after this plan one will require 482
some twenty coolis for porters. If one lays in stores for a march 492
of some months, it will want great care and a stern though discriminating rejection of the unnecessary, to keep the number from running up to fifty or more.

One seldom or never has baggage animals of one's own enough for the carriage of the camp; it may be useful in some cases to keep two or three mules or baggage-ponies; but it would not be wise to depend on them, for on these rough roads they are so apt to break down—to get a sore back or to fall lame; and sometimes one wants to go where neither mule nor pony can follow. The universal practice is for an Englishman, or for any native of rank who may get a special order from the Maharaja, to take his carriage, whether it be ponies or coolis, from stage to stage, changing it, getting fresh men or animals from the villages round, for each day's march.

Along the frequented roads there are special officers (called [622]
Kotwāl) for managing this business; where these are not, it becomes the duty of the lambardār, or headman of the village (called muqaddam in Kashmir) to undertake the service.

1: Drew G-3 (1862-1872) 1875 AV1 Kashmir AV1

492 (called muqaddam in Kashmir) to undertake the service. In
482 general there are few four-footed beasts to be had. Coolis are the chief carriers; for these 50 lbs. to 60 lbs. is a fair load; the animals would carry from 160 lbs. to 200 lbs. The daily pay for a cooli is four annas, that is sixpence; for a pony or mule twice as much. The coolis carry their loads in various ways. In the Outer Hills they carry them on their heads, first making a soft bed with their turbans; this certainly is not the best way for difficult ground; farther up, in the Middle Mountains, the people often carry the weight on their shoulders, bending their head forward and fixing the load on the shoulder and back of the neck. But the most business-like way of all is that followed by the Kashmiris, some of the Paharis, the Ladakhis, and the Baltis, of loading the back by means of a light framework of sticks and rope, which is suspended from the shoulders.

482 The amount that the Kashmiris, especially, carry in this fashion is surprising; not that they will do much more than the weakest cooli when the labour is forced, and there is only a fixed daily pittance for the work. But a great number of Kashmiri cultivators occupy themselves in spring and autumn in taking goods from the plains to Kashmir by contract, by weight, and on that bargain will exert themselves manfully. I once arranged my loads for the ordinary coolis, but afterwards met with some Kashmiris who were ready to take them by weight; these loaded themselves each with *three* of the loads that had been made up; one man carried four dozen of beer packed in cases; another load that was carried was 192 lbs.; and I have a well-authenticated case of a young man carrying 240 lbs. And this was not for a short journey, but for over a hundred miles of uneven road with many long rises and several passes, one of them over 9000 feet. In doing such feats as this the Kashmiris take their own time: the ten days' march they will take eighteen or nineteen days about; but they will do it all on a diet of unleavened bread or of rice.

000 Thus prepared with baggage and porters, we will now start from Jummoo for the journey to Kashmir; the distance is 184 miles, which will be covered in fourteen days, a day's march varying com-

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1954 AV1 Kashmir AV1

499 65 to that centre, and here a few could still be bribed out. It was known that a large percentage would never return to their families. The years-thinned the breadwinners, the fields were tended and the crops gathered by the old and very young.

• [482] The hundreds of coolies were collected together at Bandipura; here they were loaded up with the sacks of food for the garrison, loads which were two and even three times the recognised pack of fifty pounds. In addition to this they had to carry their own rations, these being about two pounds of rice per day, a carrying crutch, a frame of sticks, rope for the back load, and topping all, a bundle of straw with which to make the straw shoes they would need. Their clothes and protection consisted of whatever they had brought for themselves; most had somehow managed to bring a blanket. It is little wonder that dozens died on the way, as they crossed the snow passes, slipped on the rough track, or dropped from weakness and exposure.

[517] The dreadful thing was that even when they eventually reached Gilgit there was always the chance that they would be sold into slavery or captured by the tribesmen of that part. Tyndale-Biscoe tells of the grandfather of one of his servants, who had been forced to make this march, being exchanged for a Chinese dog; later he escaped and somehow managed to return to the Valley to tell his story. And it was not unusual for those fortunate ones who were returning to be press-ganged again to carry loads that dead or sick men in caravans following had dropped; whilst there was no assurance that next year they might not again be taken.

499 648 Then the threat of the Russian advance into India through Kashmir caused the Government of India to take over this Gilgit garrison, and in order to ensure maintenance of lines of communication, in 1892 a military road was made between Gilgit and Bandipura, the place where the coolies had been loaded, for there already existed a road as far as that town. The making of the road in those days was a great engineering achievement in the short space of time that it took. Pathans from the North-West Frontier were used for the work, at times they worked with spade in the hand and rifle at their elbow, the way being through tribal areas where the peoples resented the

2: Gervis T-3 (no date) 1984 AVI Kashmir AVI

fourteen thousand feet and none over sixteen thousand; at intervals on the Poonch side great masses stand out from them like bastions, making it difficult to believe that some giant hand had not built this wall.

Murree is a health resort, the place where pallid cheeks gain a pink glow within a few days, the resort which, because of its climate, makes Pakistan tolerable to the long-suffering European who serves there. The air is invigorating, there is usually a coolish breeze, and within a very short while those who have arrived there "just to laze the days away", find themselves suggesting long walks through the wonderfully interesting hills, past babbling brooks, along narrow paths which lead through pink-barked, scented pines, firs and shady trees to some "special spot of our own", probably one such as is often passed on the road-side where the rocks are black wet with water and green with slime, but decorated with masses of dainty, trembling maidenhair ferns which cling to them, growing out from every crack and crevice that will offer them a root hold; they are large leafed, with shining black, wire-like stems.

Those who stay there can sit and cool themselves in contemplation of the far distant snows and admire the beauty of the country lying below their feet and above their heads, with all its differing shades of colours and variety of the shapes of the trees; the smoke-like wisps of cloud which are blown and drawn by air currents up and down the slopes; the intriguing red roof-tops of a hill-station house among the firs and pines, and little gardens of the peasants, which are terraced down spurs of the mountains, and the winding tracks—those you had never realised existed—with the load-carrying coolies striding down with empty baskets on their back, or struggling up with a load, in their hands a T shaped stick on which to rest it when they stand, for the basket or package is carried high on their backs; a head strap across the forehead stops the load from falling back as they climb; once on the ground it would be impossible to lift back unaided.

Kohala, which is the next stage on from Murree, is nearly thirty miles distant. The descent from the hills is steep, and it squats, stuffy and airless, shut in between hills at a height of only eighteen hundred feet above the sea level. In summer it is

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AV1 Kashmir AV I

which is about twelve thousand feet. Our first camp was at an altitude of over nine thousand feet in a glade in the pine forest, the turf covered with blue forget-me-nots. The march up was lovely, through one succession of copses of jasmine and scented wild rose, the latter of all colours from white to dark red. Close to the camp we came on the first signs of the army which had preceded us—a line of graves of men who had died of cholera. The troops and coolies were said to have suffered much from this scourge, and we arranged to avoid their camping grounds in future. The following morning we continued our march, the road winding up through pine forest till the rounded tops of the watershed were reached. We halted for an hour at the top, surrounded by a wilderness of flowers, blue gentian, anemones, acres of white and yellow blossoms bordering the wreaths of snow, masses of small pink alpine flowers, wild rhubarb and sorrel in profusion, and patches of dwarf juniper, for we were well above the pine and birches. The views from here are lovely—to the left, steep pine-clad slopes descend into the famed Lolab valley, behind, stretched out thousands of feet below, lie the valley of Kashmir and the blue sheet of the Woollar Lake, backed by the snowy range of the Pir Panjal; to the right stand the great square peak and snow-fields of Haramukh; in front, a hundred miles away, towers Nanga Parbat, from which on both hands as far as the eye can reach tossed ranges patched with snow fill up the picture.

I had an example on reaching camp this day of the extraordinary carrying power of the Kashmiri coolie; my tent was late coming up, and when it

4z Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI

arrived I found one man carrying it, a large solid leather kit bag, and his own rations. The weight was at the least a hundred and fifty pounds. I was extremely angry, and made it very unpleasant all round, as plenty of coolies had been arranged for. Nothing of the sort ever occurred again, but my orderlies told me, and I saw enough to show that the report was true, that the sepoys treated the coolies like dogs, and beat them as they would a beast of burden. The fact is, the Kashmiri villager proper, to which class our carriers belonged, comes of a race that has been mercilessly oppressed for centuries by foreign Mahomedan rulers from India. Being a Mahomedan, he has been specially ill-used since Kashmir passed under Hindu rule. The sepoys and officials of all classes are almost to a man Dogras and other Hindus who have absolutely no sympathy with the Kashmiri. The race is physically fine, great, strong men and well fed, but morally they are, what their oppression has made them, liars and pitiful cowards, who cringe to the stick of the sepoy like spaniels. My coolies said they were never paid when employed on Government work, and that they generally had to supply their own rations. They certainly expected no pay on this occasion, and were delighted and astonished beyond measure when I saw them paid myself. The Durbar made nothing by the transaction when coolies were impressed, it was duly charged for their hire, but the money stuck in the hands of those drawing it. A new era has now opened, owing to the revenue settlement carried out by my friend, Mr Walter Lawrence, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, whose services

4: Durand G-3 (1888-93) 1900 AVI Kashmir AVI
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K 705 Feeling that the whole secret of supply for the Gilgit troops lay in extending cultivation, I had turned my energies to making water channels which would bring thousands of acres of waste land under the plough. To this end I had obtained the services of a company of Kashmir sappers under a most excellent and well-trained officer, Major Gokul Chand. His men were badly equipped, but willing, and he was a tower of strength. We had done a good deal towards improving the irrigation of the valley before I realised the full extent of my coming difficulties in supplying the troops. When I found out exactly how we stood I took off every available man from this most necessary work, and turned all my strength on to the still more urgent task of improving the existing tracks into paths fit for mule traffic. The necessity for this was evident. Over K [482] bad roads coolies can only carry a load of from sixty to eighty pounds, in addition to five days' food for themselves. After the first few days they begin to consume what they carry, and bad roads make short marches. Mules carry four and five times as much as men, and only eat twice as much. Roughly stated, that is the whole problem of supply over frontier roads.

K 712 D 487 Eighteen miles from Gilgit was the fort of Nomal, which the tribesmen had besieged three years before. For fourteen miles the road was fairly practicable for mules, but four miles were impassable in summer. In winter the road ran down into the bed of the river, and mules could use it, but when the snows began melting and poured their floods down the valleys the lower road became impassable, and only